

### REMARKS

The present invention pertains to a method for treating neuropathically-induced negative sensory phenomena (numbness of the skin) by application of a local anesthetic at the site of the numbness. The method involves topically applying a local anesthetic to the skin at or near the site of the numbness.

The claims of the present application have been rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz et al. (US 5,028,435) in view of Goodman and Gilman's (The Pharmacological Basic of Therapeutics). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Office Action cites Katz et al. for its disclosure of, "a system and method for delivery for transdermal drug delivery [sic]." Goodman and Gilman's is a well known text and is cited for teaching examples of local anesthetics such as lidocaine, dibucaine, etc. The Action then states that it would have been obvious to use the teachings of Goodman and Gilman's that lidocaine could be administered topically as an anesthetic in the system of Katz et al. which discloses a transdermal system which can comprise anesthetics, to disclose the invention as claimed. Applicants agree that it would be obvious to combine the two cited references to create an anesthetic patch containing lidocaine. Moreover, Applicants are aware of several topical products which utilize lidocaine as an anesthetic. However, nowhere in any prior art is there a disclosure of using such a patch to treat numbness, as claimed in the present application.

The purpose of applying lidocaine as set forth in Goodman and Gilman is to numb the skin to which it is applied. Note however that this is not the presently claimed invention. Rather the claimed invention is a method for relieving numbness (not causing numbness) by application of topical lidocaine or other similar anesthetic. Since the cited references only show the use of lidocaine for causing numbness, Applicants believe that the art teaches away from the present invention, and the invention as presently claimed is novel and nonobvious. Applicants believe that there is no prior art showing the use of topical lidocaine or other anesthetic for relieving numbness. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the claimed invention is patentable over the cited prior art and respectfully request early and favorable notification to that effect.

Respectfully submitted,



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